Faculty Association UCSB newsletter

A Membership Organization of Faculty at the University of California, Santa Barbara

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UCSB in Crisis!

What the Budget Cuts Mean

BY JOEL MICHAELSEN

How serious are the impacts of California's budget problems on UCSB? The direct answer – that UCSB's state funding needs to be cut by about $16 million by the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2009) – is startling but not particularly illuminating.

To get a more complete picture, it is necessary to delve into the background of our current budget, events from the earlier years of this decade, and likely developments over the next few years. First, it is worth noting that even the direct answer is not entirely certain because the $16 million figure includes UCSB's portion of a mid-year cut to the UC of about $65 million that the Governor has proposed but the Legislature has not ratified. Until the government can agree on final budget actions for this year, we will not know for sure what our mid-year cut will be, and we may soon be referring to it as an end-of-the-year cut, rather than a mid-year cut.

The total core budget from which the $16 million cut must be taken is $313 million, so at first glance the cut doesn't seem too drastic. However, almost half of the core budget either can't be cut or has been exempted from cuts for policy reasons. The largest exclusion is permanent faculty salaries, which total $99 million. The campus does not have the authority to cut the salaries of current faculty, and to my knowledge, there has been no serious discussion of this possibility at the system-wide level. Other significant exclusions are student financial aid ($42 million), utility costs ($11 million), and academic preparation ($1.1 million). The total remaining budget after exclusions is $161 million, so this year's cut is almost exactly 10 per cent of the "cutable" portion of the budget.

This "cutable" budget is not spread evenly across the UCSB campus. Nearly 60 per cent ($96 million) is in the Academic Affairs Division under the Executive Vice Chancellor. This money covers TA and lecturer salaries, salaries of staff in the colleges and academic departments, the libraries, Academic Programs (Instructional Computing, Instructional Development, etc.), Graduate Division, and several smaller departments. The next largest portions of the cutable budget are 16 per cent ($26 million) in Administrative Services and 12 per cent ($19 million) in Student Affairs. The concentration of programs supported by state funds in the Executive Vice Chancellor's operation means that it is virtually impossible to accomplish a cut of this magnitude without cutting a large dollar amount from the funds for the core academic enterprise.

While the cuts have to be taken in core state funds, it is possible to spread the impacts to non-core funded units by raising assessments charged to cover overhead costs of their operations. One such program is the Non State Funded Administrative Services (NFSAS) assessment which charges operations that are supported by non-state funds (e.g., Housing and the UCen) a percentage of their expenses to cover the workloads they generate in state-funded administrative units such as Human Resources, Accounting, and Business Services. Following the recommendation of the Budget Strategy Committee, this fee

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> "There does not seem to be any possibility of achieving cuts of this magnitude through modest incremental measures."

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has been raised from 1 per cent to 4 per cent of expenditures – still well below the rates paid in overhead on federal grants for these services. This move will raise approximately $3 million which can be used by the Vice Chancellors whose units are paying the fees to offset some of their overall cuts. Additional assessment proposals that would increase revenues starting in 2009-10 are being developed by the Budget Strategy Committee and will be sent out for campus review soon.

In addition to the $3 million from the NFSAS rate increase, the Chancellor has pledged $1.5 million from development funds, at least for this year, to reduce the size of the actual cut to $11.4 million. The Vice Chancellors have been assigned percentage cuts ranging from more than 12 per cent for the Chancellor's "direct reports" (such as the Academic Senate and Budget and Planning) down to 5 per cent for the EVC. The 5 per cent figure is modest on a relative basis, but the absolute dollar amount of $5 million is by far the largest of any of the control points, reflecting the fact that so much of the core budget is in the EVC's operation. All of the deans have been given targets and directed to produce plans to meet their cuts, but it is too soon to know the specific actions that will be taken. Everyone will have the option of using one-time money, such as turnover salary savings or carry forward, to meet their cuts this year but will have to have permanent actions in place by June 30, 2009.

If this was a single bad year in otherwise rosy budget times, it probably would not be too difficult to meet the cuts without significantly impacting faculty instruction and research activities. Unfortunately, it comes after several years of cuts earlier in this decade when the campus gave up around 12 per cent of its state funding as state funding dropped from 47 per cent to 36 per cent of total campus expenditures. Furthermore, the 2009-10 budget is almost certain to include cuts at least as large as this year's. The Governor's initial proposal provides essentially flat funding for UC, which would result in a cut of comparable magnitude to the one we are faced with this year. A flat-funded budget means significant cuts, because costs of many things will unavoidably go up and the funds to cover increases will have to come from internal reallocations. Some examples include $3.9 million for 440 students we have enrolled but not received state funding for, $2.3 million for salary increases from collective bargaining agreements, $3 million for faculty recruitment packages, $2.8 million for increased health benefit costs, $3 million for faculty merit raises, $1.2 million for faculty retention packages, $1 million for price increases in library acquisitions, and $.5 million for new space operations. These are estimates, and the list is not comprehensive, but we quickly get to numbers that are as large as the $16 million cut for this year.

Finally, we need to start thinking now about what will happen if the global economy and state budget do not markedly improve by 2010-11. We may well have to absorb a third year of substantial budget cuts. It is too soon to know specifically what the impacts of the budgets will be this year, much less in future years. There does not seem to be any possibility of achieving cuts of this magnitude through modest incremental measures. We will need to make sure that non-state funded units pay their full share of the costs associated with their activities, rather than having indirect costs subsidized by state funding as we have in the past. We will also have to figure out how to do some things quite differently than we do now and, possibly, what things to stop doing altogether.

For now it appears likely that

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Professor of Geography Joel Michaelsen is chair of the UCSB Academic Senate and co-chair with Executive Vice Chancellor Gene Lucas of the Budget Strategy Committee.

How Safe Is Your Pension?

Ed. Note: the following excerpts are taken by permission from the UCLA Faculty Association Newsletter.

Q Should I be worried about receiving my pension if I am retiring within 5 years?

A No. UCRP has enough assets to cover retirements within 5 years.

On Nov. 30, 2008, there was about $30.8 billion in UCRP. A typical payment to retirees is about $155 million per month or $1.86 billion per year.

Q Will I have to contribute to UCRP in July 2009?

A Yes. UCRP will need contributions from all employers and employees at UC. The UC Regents voted to resume contributions to UCRP on July 1, 2009. In the next few months they will decide how to split the contribution between employers and employees. It is likely employees will start by paying 2-3% (redirecting individual DCP contributions to UCRP; note that the amount depends on whether one is coordinated with Social Security) and all employers at UC by paying 9.54%, thus making a combined contribution of 11.54%. In the next academic year, 2010-11, the contributions could go up to 4-5% for employees and 11.54% for employers, raising the combined contribution to 15.54-16.54%. Further increases in following years are likely.

Q If UCRP is 100% funded , why are contributions needed?

A To maintain 100% funding, contributions are necessary to cover the cost of the current year of teaching & research service on the projected future benefit. This annual cost, the Normal Cost, is currently 16.9% of payroll.

If the current liability covers the cost of past service, another portion of UCRP's total liability covers the cost of the current year of service. If the cost of current service is added every year to the cost of the past service, then the fund's assets stay in balance with its liabilities. This annual cost is called the Normal Cost. Currently, the Regents estimate the Normal Cost for all participants in UCRP as 16.9% of payroll. In dollars, the UCRP Normal Cost for 2008-09 plan year is about $1.26B (16.9% of the $7.47B covered payroll on July 1, 2008). The figure of $1.26B is the cost of service for the current year for all active plan participants.

Q How are the returns on UCRP assets related to pension funding?

A If return on assets is greater than projected rate of return (7.5%), some part of the return can fund employer & employee contributions.

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EAP's Budget Paradox

BY MICHAEL O'CONNELL

As an academic program with no home campus, the popular overseas study experience faces life-threatening cuts

GIVEN THE 21ST-century need for globally aware graduates, you would think that study abroad would be the focus of growth for a major public university system. But if that major public university system is the University of California, you would be wrong.

Last year the systemwide EAP was subjected to a debilitating 15 per cent cut in its funding, and this year the Office of the President has demanded that it come up with a "business plan" that eliminates nearly all of its general fund appropriation, replacing it with student ed fees that amount to a cut of about 30 per cent of its revenue and requires a downsizing of its student numbers and the elimination of key elements of the program.

The brainchild of Clark Kerr, EAP began as a systemwide program on the UCSB campus 46 years ago. EAP currently has some 150 programs in 32 countries, both in highly rated foreign universities and in UC-designed programs taught by local university faculty. But if not unique, UCSB has become the heaviest user of EAP, having recently passed even Berkeley in student numbers. Last year more than 900 UCSB students participated in EAP, the largest number ever. UCSB has a strong stake in keeping EAP alive and well.

Unless UC faculty can prevail with OP, EAP will be reduced to a shadow of its former self, unable to grow, or even maintain current programs. UC faculty will no longer lead the study centers abroad, a much-admired element of the program in its 46 years and a guarantor of the UC quality of programs abroad. Cost-shaving will inevitably degrade the language programs and cause the elimination of the core courses that enable students to complete a full complement of courses while studying in foreign universities.

Yes, we all know that the University is suffering significantly from the underfunding whose immediate cause lies in the State of California's budget woes. But EAP has already been subjected to cuts that far exceed what other academic programs are facing and now is threatened with cuts so significant that they must damage its academic character and reduce the numbers of students who can participate. An immediate effect will be the downsizing of the campus office that recruits, advises and selects UCSB students to participate; the effect of that will be at least a halving of student numbers.

None of this has to do with the quality of EAP. A joint administrative/academic senate task force last year gave EAP very high marks and recommended that it be put at the center of a doubling of study abroad numbers on the campuses over the next five years. President Yudof in fact has termed EAP "excellent."

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What Will a Third Year of Hard Times Mean? Fewer Lecturers & TAs and Smaller Classes

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most academic departments will be faced with cuts of around 5 per cent this year and at least 5 per cent, possibly more, next year, with the third year lurking as a big question mark. There is not much uncommitted money in the budgets of the deans, or even the EVC, so they will have only limited capacity to cushion the impacts on the departments.

The temporary sub 0 money that pays salaries for TAs and lecturers is one possibility, but it is already under severe pressure as many departments across campus are unable to offer classes or sections to meet student demand. The money that funds summer instruction is another option, as most of it has never been permanently allocated. It is not all expended providing instruction in summer, but the balance provides a much needed source for plugging holes in the FWS budget. A third option is to slow the rate of faculty hiring.

This would save on recruitment costs and also keep more money in the temporary sub 0 pool for TAs and lecturers. On the other hand, it would potentially disadvantage departments that experience relatively high numbers of retirements or separations.

The budgets of most academic departments (excluding permanent faculty salaries) are largely made up of staff salaries, so a significant proportion of the cuts that do get allocated to departments will have to be met with reductions in staff. Hopefully, most of the reductions can be achieved through turnover or voluntary reductions in time, but reductions in the amount of work done by staff are unavoidable.

For many departments, staff and work reductions will likely be accomplished through mergers of departmental staff and/or the establishment of service centers with employees will handle the same tasks (e.g. payroll, purchasing, grants administration) for several departments.

To conclude, the current status of UCSB's budget is challenging, to say the least, and we will need to make some substantial changes to the ways we do things. We might discover, however, that actions taken under the duress of budget cuts could lead to notable improvements in the functioning of the University and in the ability of faculty to do their teaching and research.

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Cuts Threaten 46-year-old EAP

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"The consequence of more cuts would be the elimination of more programs, the loss of funding for core courses in the immersion programs, and the elimination of most of the rest of the faculty directorships."

The reason lies solely in the administratively exposed position of EAP and its somewhat anomalous reporting line. EAP reports directly to the Office of the President, not to a chancellor, and so enjoys none of the protections afforded to—and perhaps more importantly, the comprehension of—academic programs on the UC campuses. OP is purely an administrative unit—UC's "corporate headquarters"—and has little or no ability to oversee or evaluate academic programs. In the past two years, after major criticism of its functionality, OP has been subject to a massive reorganizing (read downsizing) of units and wholesale slashing of its budget.

Because it reports to OP, EAP was caught up in this budget maelstrom with no reference to its unique situation or attention paid to the fact that it is an academic program.

In September 2007 it was told to prepare for a possible 10 percent budget cut, then three months later was ordered to cut 15 per cent, with absolutely no heed given to how EAP would fund academic programs already in place and for which it was in the midst of recruiting students.

EAP was forced to deal not with any academic administrator or academic committee, but simply with budget-minded functionaries at OP. By all accounts, OP was in chaos last year, so EAP could scarcely have expected that anyone there could hope to give it proper administrative attention. EAP was simply a source from which $3 million could be extracted to meet OP budget needs. Now OP wants to cut most of the rest of EAP's funding and transfer its costs to inadequate student ed fees.

In fact, OP wasn't even prepared to admit that EAP is an academic program. When asked if he considered it such, or a mere provider of services, then-Provost (and at that point de facto president of the University) Rory Hume replied that he was "agnostic" on that question. But it should have seemed obvious that a program in which UC students paying UC fees earn UC units and UC grades in academic programs overseen and reviewed by UC faculty *is* an academic program.

For at least the past decade EAP's funding has been precarious. In 2005 it discovered a deficit of $2.4 million in its operations, a one-time problem that was caused by a "perfect storm" of financial stresses, including unexpectedly expensive new UC-construct programs in London, Paris, and Rome, the need to legalize its study centers abroad, a necessary move to a more expensive headquarters building on Storke and Hollister, and the falling value of the dollar abroad.

No doubt EAP also needed more rigorous financial management. But one plausible interpretation of the deficit is that EAP's funding had grown increasingly inadequate to the larger mission it was asked to take on in 2000, including a doubling of its student numbers by 2005.

One result of the deficit is that it appears to have persuaded some at OP that EAP is a bloated and mismanaged operation. It's not. Tighter financial controls were instituted immediately after the deficit was discovered, and no further deficits have occurred. EAP's per-student costs are comparable to the per-student costs on the campuses. And as any faculty study center director past or present can attest, its overseas operations are run very tightly. UC has received excellent value for money in EAP, and over 63,000 EAP alumni can attest to the life-changing academic and personal effects it has had on them.

The cuts thus far, while mainly targeted on the administrative University Office of EAP, have already taken a toll. Three programs in France were cut, the 400 students in the "great cities" programs are being charged a sizable supplemental fee, and five faculty directorships have been cut. No recruiting for study center directors beyond 2010 is currently taking place.

In August the systemwide administration of EAP was mandated by OP to come up with a "business plan" that would transfer funding of its operations to student ed fees and eliminate nearly all of its state funding. Because ed fees are subject to a 33% "tax" for scholarship funding ("return to aid") this would necessitate a sizable further cut, probably in the range of 30% or more, in overall funding.

The consequence of more cuts would be the elimination of more programs, the loss of funding for core courses in the immersion programs, and the elimination of most of the rest of the faculty directorships. Among the propose cuts is a supplement to the campus EAP offices, which are responsible for recruitment, selection, and orientation of students studying through EAP. The loss of this support for the campus offices will mean an immediate fall in student numbers here—and on all UC campuses.

What can faculty do to make clear to President Yudof that EAP is essential to us?

Fortunately, the Academic Council, in its meeting on December 17, deemed the draft business plan unacceptable and insisted that EAP is indeed an academic program and hence falls under the Senate's authority as defined by Stand-

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Professor of English Michael O'Connell is campus coordinator of EAP and a member of the UCSB FA Board of Directors.

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Join the UCSB Faculty Association

The Faculty Association at UCSB is a voluntary, dues-supported organization of UCSB Academic Senate Members, founded in 1979. The purpose of the FA is to influence the decisions of the University administration and the State Legislature that affect faculty salaries, benefits, and working conditions broadly defined. The FA at UCSB supports the Academic Senate in all academic matters and works closely with the Senate on welfare issues. Because it has no State funding, the FA at UCSB can and does engage in lobbying and other nonpartisan political activities on behalf of faculty. Membership in the FA at UCSB is open to all faculty eligible for membership in the UCSB Academic Senate. If you wish to become a member, please complete the application below.

Application for Membership

I wish to join the Faculty Association at UC Santa Barbarta. I agree to pay the following dues (check one) by payroll deduction (in which case, please sign and submit the form below) or by personal check.

$5.00 per month for Assistant Professors
$7.50 per month for Associate Professors
$10.00 per month for Professors

Lecturers with security of employment, please designate the dues that most nearly approximate your salary range.

Faculty Association dues are tax deductible: either on Schedule A of your income tax to the extent that they and other profession-related and income-producing expenses exceed 2 per cent of your adjusted gross income; or in some instances on Schedule C without the 2 per cent limitation. Please check with your tax consultant.)

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This authorization shall remain in effect until revoked by me - allowing up to 30 days time to change the payroll records in order to make effective this assignment or revocation thereof - or until another employee organization becomes my exclusive representative.
It is understood that this authorization shall become void in the event the employee organization's eligibility for payroll deduction terminates for any reason. Upon termination of my employment with the University, this authorization will no longer be in effect.
This authorization does not include dues, initiation fees and general assessments to cover any time prior to the payroll period in which the initial deduction is made. Payroll deductions, including those legally required and those authorized by an employee are assigned priorities. In the event there are insufficient earnings to cover all required and authorized deductions, it is understood that deductions will be taken in the order assigned by the University and no adjustment will be made in a subsequent pay period for membership dues, initiation fees and general assessments.

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RETENTION: 1 YEAR AFTER INACTIVE - ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Pensions Affect Total Compensation

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The one-year return on assets is one of the components used to establish contribution levels. If the assets perform at a rate lower than the assumed 7.5%, then contributions in the amount of the Normal Cost might not be enough to maintain full funding. If the assets perform better than the assumed rate, then some part of the excess can be used in lieu of contributions. There is much more volatility in the investment returns than in the funding ratio. Despite a similar pattern of investment returns for UCRP and CalPERS, the largest pension plan in California and the country, returns have entirely funded UC employer and employee contributions to UCRP for 18 years, while CalPERS has required significant employer and employee contributions over this same period. How can this be? Why does a fund roughly 4 times the size of UCRP and with similar returns require significant contributions while UCRP does not? The answer may involve many factors like a lower than 100% funding ratio for CalPERS, higher investment expense, higher population risk, but one thing is clear: investment return is quite different from the funding ratio. One is a fairly straightforward way of seeing how assets performed in a given year and the other is a heavily subjective weighting of the size of changing current assets and assumptions about future liabilities.

Q What will be the effect of contributions to UCRP on UC's competitive position?

A Contributions to UCRP will lower UC's competitive position. For the past 18 years, UC has counterbalanced lower faculty salaries with 0% contribution to UCRP. Once contributions start, faculty salaries will fall further behind those offered at UC's Comparison institutions, and total remuneration will be substantially reduced. If faculty pay into UCRP without salary increases, their total compensation will be reduced by the amount of the contribution. It will be, in effect, a pay cut. Faculty from other institutions, especially private universities, will be reluctant to change their position for one at a public university like UC subject to the vagaries of state funding and now with a retirement plan that requires significant contributions.

UC Regents are aware of the problems raised by requiring faculty to contribute to UCRP and included a provision in the new UCRP funding policy to consider the impact of contributions on UC's competitive position in setting the levels of employee contributions. The Academic Council has also been concerned about the impact of resumed contributions on both the competitiveness of UC and total remuneration. In August of 2007, the UC Academic Council issued a statement that the restart of employee contributions for both faculty and staff must not reduce UC's competitiveness in total remuneration. Any restart of contributions must be accompanied by substantial salary increases, both to compensate for the restart of contributions and to move cash compensation quickly toward more competitive levels.

It is worth remembering that the Regents passed a total remuneration plan (RE-61) for UC in 2005. The overall strategy was to rebalance benefits with compensation: for example, retirement was 63% above market levels in 2005, while cash compensation was 15% below market. The resumption of contributions to UCRP was one of the first steps in this projected rebalancing process. In the Ten Year Total Compensation plan, UC estimated salary increases of 5% for the first year, followed by 5 years of increases at the level of 51/2%, then 4 years of 6% salary increases. In addition, these salary increases would raise covered compensation and thereby result in higher retirement benefits.

Economic conditions in the state have not supported the projected salary increases for faculty envisioned by the Regents. Faculty received 2% in 2006-7 and 2.5% in 2007-8, 0% in 2008-9. Very optimistically the Regents asked for a 5% to increase faculty salaries in their budget request to the state for 2009-10. As contributions to UCRP resume, it is important to watch the progress of UC's 10 year total compensation plan as it is enacted in different employee layers throughout the university workforce. It would be unfair for directors, managers, and executives to receive salary range increases of 5% after an annual review to offset retirement contributions, while faculty receive salary range increases on a 2 or 3 year merit and promotion review process but no salary range increases to offset retirement contributions.

It is important for the university as a whole to restore faculty compensation to acceptable levels so that contributions to a retirement plan are seen as an obligation comparable to the obligation required by all employees at other universities and places of employment and not a further assault on a declining competitive position and a declining picture of total compensation at UC.

Cuts Threaten EAP's Existence

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ing Order of the Regents 105.2. *"As such it must be reviewed with the same rigor and according to the same criteria as any other academic program, and its budget decisions must be driven by academic priorities."* It further insisted that "changes of the magnitude proposed for EAP require much more justification and careful analysis than what is contained in the draft business plan."

The Council requests that a joint Senate-Administration task force be convened to plan for EAP future and that it be given sufficient time to develop a well considered strategic plan that builds on analysis from last year that was largely absent in the draft plan.

This is a crucial step that the faculty must insist on. Our traditions of shared governance demand no less. The Council did not object to the possibility that EAP may need to take cuts of the sort imposed on other academic programs, but it insisted that these cuts should be based on programmatic priorities, not a budget bottom line. Crucially, it objected to the idea that EAP is a student service, rather than an academic program, whose funding could come entirely through ed and reg fees. Such a task force could also raise the question whether EAP's currently dysfunctional reporting line should be altered. Should EAP report rather to a campus and a chancellor, where there are structures for properly overseeing academic programs?

For most of its existence, until 1990, EAP reported to the UCSB chancellor. There are certainly other examples of systemwide programs being sited on a single campus. Most importantly, the faculty should insist that EAP's future be secured in such a way that it may become even more important for UC's global outreach. There are certainly important roles for it to play in graduate education and in faculty collaboration abroad. Can EAP, for example, make use of Europe's highly successful Erasmus program?

Above all, we need to insist that UC not damage to its much-admired international studies program at just the time when other universities are discovering the need of such structures? We must insure that there be full consideration of what could be lost—and lost to other university systems—in heedless cutbacks.